

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Emmanuel Church of England Voluntary Aided Middle School

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Address</b>            | Howe Lane, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 6JF |                         |  |
| <b>Date of inspection</b> | 11 July 2019                         | <b>Status of school</b> | Academy inspected as VA Wimborne Academy Trust (WAT) |
| <b>Diocese</b>            | Salisbury                            | <b>URN</b>              | 145405   |

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|------------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall Judgement</b>     | <b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b> | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>Additional Judgements</b> | <b>The impact of collective worship</b>   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|                              | <b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>  | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Good</b> |

#### School context

Emmanuel is a middle school with 405 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Since the last denominational inspection, the school has joined Wimborne Academy Trust (WAT) with an executive headteacher and head of school.

#### The school's Christian vision

'At Emmanuel we are inspired to go beyond our own limits.'  
A vision stirred by Colossians 3:22

#### Key findings

- Being part of WAT has enabled Emmanuel Middle School (EMS) to be on a transformational journey, whilst preserving its uniqueness, stirred by its vision and values.
- The leadership team has created a culture of high aspirations, going beyond the limits, and empowering leaders within the school, harnessing talent amongst the trust.
- Pupils are passionate about the phenomenal change in the school, which is enabling them to live out the three values of excellence, endeavour and enjoyment.
- The connectedness experienced when the school family comes together for worship permeates through the school to parents.
- The community is demonstrating the core values of excellence, endeavour and enjoyment, evident in rising standards, alongside the wider curriculum, which includes science, the arts and religious education (RE).

#### Areas for development

- Use the strong leadership, already begun in RE by the new subject leader, to empower staff and pupils in deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- Enable pupils to meet people of diverse faiths and beliefs more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.
- Deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of St Michael, to whom their parish church is dedicated, and the liturgical pattern of the church year as the foundation of Christian worship.

## **How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?**

### **Inspection findings**

A great sense of open-ness as well as connectedness is evident in the transformational journey which is very much part of the 'Emmanuel Way'. Stirred by its vision to go beyond its limits, this school does not accept the minimum requirement, but strives for the best. Girded by its three core values of excellence, endeavour and enjoyment, Emmanuel Middle School (EMS) is very much a family unity. Here, staff care, support and challenge each other and the pupils to bring out the very best in one another. Undoubtedly, being part of WAT has enabled the whole community to feel valued with a fresh impetus. Each member makes a positive difference to the life of the school, living out the 'Emmanuel Way'. This includes the pupils who can articulate their school vision and values well, knowing their root is to be found in St Paul's teaching. Being in WAT, and the first school it sponsored, makes a difference to the journey of Church school improvement. This is attributed to the fact that one cannot change what has happened but the future can be influenced. The school's vision now shapes all policy and practice from a spiritual point of view. This stems from a passionate collegiate approach to leadership, seeking to encourage others. This has been likened to, 'Esther standing up for such a time as this', firmly committed to her strong beliefs. EMS greatly benefits from training and support offered by the diocese.

Moreover, the leadership team has established a culture of high expectations for all, investing in, and empowering, new and existing leaders within the school. Gifts and expertise have been harnessed for the benefit of all, across different subject areas of the curriculum, including science, the arts and RE. In addition, the skills of the pastoral team have been increased to support pupils with social and emotional needs, so all flourish. They ensure there are no barriers to learning so pupils can go beyond their limits and strive for excellence. This means pupils work hard, engage and enjoy life. There is a sense of togetherness, with a focus on the individual and their unique personalities and talents. This has resulted in rising standards, rapid improvement and progress across all groups of pupils, including those who are vulnerable. In Key Stage 2 there has been rapid, sustainable growth, with results much improved from last year, especially for vulnerable pupils. Success stories include pupils who have been excluded becoming subject ambassadors for the school. As one parent confirmed, 'EMS is more than a school. It is a unity. They are there when things are good and bad and work with you to get back on track.' During their time at EMS, pupils become confident young adults.

One of the ways in which this is seen is through two pupils who demonstrated this confidence by standing in the election to be members of the Dorset youth parliament. Choosing subjects close to their hearts, pupils have a voice. This includes such areas as helping the homeless and the lonely as well as a commitment to recycling and keeping Dorset clean and tidy. Social action in this school is strong. Going beyond supporting the local foodbank, pupils' eyes are opened to see hardships which exist outside the school and the 'Verwood bubble'. As one pupil put it, 'God created our land, his place, so we should respect it.' Stewardship, as well as broadening their horizons, is enhanced by inspirational leaders, such as Bear Grylls, whom some pupils were privileged to meet. The school's houses are named after inspiring people. There is a real sense of enjoyment, leading to endeavour, enabling pupils to achieve their best within these teams. Pupils' connectedness influences the staff too, with the team working towards the same goal.

In all this, forgiveness is pivotal, amongst the healthy relationships which exist here. Staff are committed to each other and recognise each other's strengths. Pupils enjoy taking on roles to help others. The strong relationship with a local special school includes a tea party hosted at EMS, with pupils learning empathy and respect for difference. EMS works closely with other schools in the trust, ensuring positive partnerships and smooth transitions. A key piece of work has engaged the school in an exciting cutting edge Holocaust project and what faith in action means.

Music in collective worship also brings the community together. For staff, it is a joyous time, with 'singing collectively' brightening up the day. It provides important time to reflect and helps pupils to be more positive in their work, giving help to those who need it most. As one pupil put it, 'Worship helps me to feel more connected to my friends and peers.' For another pupil, it has, 'resolved many arguments with friends by letting each Bible quote sink in'. The collective worship review team, meeting fortnightly, has a key role in shaping worship, with staff and pupils making a strong contribution with their musical gifts. EMS enjoys worship led by

many, including staff, clergy and the local youth worker. As one member of staff endorsed, 'The singing is very moving, with EMS in full voice.' At church services, such as the Year 8 Leavers' service, there is standing room only for parents. Currently, pupils' knowledge of St Michael, to whom their parish church is dedicated, is limited. Pupils readily identify that Emmanuel, their school name, means 'God is with us' and this informs their understanding of a trinitarian God. Monitoring, including pupil voice, informs future planning and there is a new collective worship leader in place alongside a collective worship action plan. Pupils thoughtfully contribute their own prayers, linked to their school vision and values.

With a new RE subject leader and a new RE curriculum and new resources in place, pupils and staff are enjoying RE. The new curriculum is very much linked to the school's vision and to curriculum intent. Training is in place to support non specialists, with staff more confident in knowing what greater depth looks like in RE. The strong RE leader has transformed RE in a very short space of time, deepening knowledge and understanding in both staff and pupils. This has resulted in Year 8 pupils' more positive response to RE, wanting to learn more. Pupils reflect, engage in debates, express their own views and show understanding of different opinions. However, encountering people of diverse faiths and beliefs is currently limited.

The sense of togetherness and purpose at EMS inspires everyone to go beyond what might be thought as possible. As such, it is an 'incredible message for life'.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

With a new RE subject leader in post, standards in RE have been raised. The school's assessment of teaching and learning in RE, through the regular monitoring which now takes place, is accurate. RE expectations are now in line with English. All pupils are making good progress, including vulnerable pupils, so all are now flourishing academically in RE at EMS.

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| Executive headteacher/Head of school | Ron Jenkinson/Rob Christopher |
| Inspector's name and number          | Lizzie McWhirter 244          |